

THE INTEGRATION OF CURRENT EVENTS INTO
THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OF THE
DES MOINES, IOWA, SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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by
Albert Henry Graziano
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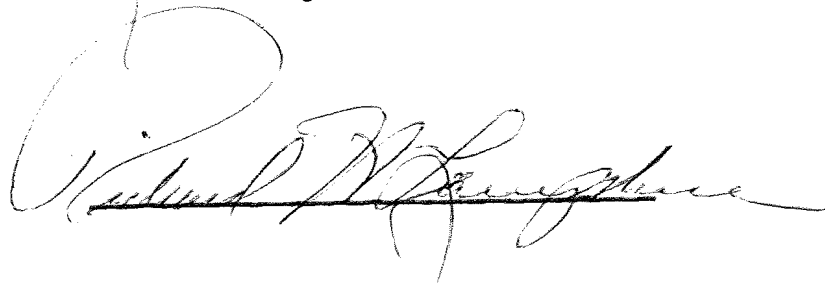
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is a key word in the highly technological world of today. Government, science, industry, and labor are all developing new operational procedures, which are either entirely new or reforms of antiquated procedures. The field of education is also innovating in such areas as curriculum changes, new teaching techniques and materials, differentiated staffing, greater student and teacher involvement in the educational process, and changes in school design and construction. Antiquated techniques are under fire and innovative practices are taking top billing in the profession today. The National Education Association, through the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (NCTEPS), sponsored the Year of the Non-Conference (YOTNC), 1966-1968, during which demonstration schools provided the leadership across the country.¹ The Year of the Non-Conference had two main goals: (1) to develop ways to give teachers more time to teach, and (2) to encourage school systems to take bold and innovative steps to improve the instructional process.²

Teachers, administrators, and interested citizens were urged to work together toward the goal of improved instruction. Professional

¹National Education Association dispatch, YOTNC, [Washington, D.C.] Non-News, July 1, 1967.

²Ibid.

educators need to be aware of the changes taking place and of the additional resources at their disposal. They need to reexamine their own subject area, their own classroom procedures, and critically analyze them to see if a change is needed. But change does not just happen, and teachers are not always able or willing to play the role of innovator. Others, of course, are able and willing to change. The field of social studies in the high school is now lending itself to change, just as the field of mathematics did before it. New ways of teaching the social studies are being presented, and an examination of past and present practices is needed to determine what can be conserved and integrated into the new system.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to identify patterns or models of how the teaching of current events was incorporated into the social studies curriculum in the Secondary Schools of Des Moines, Iowa; (2) to determine how much time was devoted to current events instruction in said classes; (3) to present professional educators' attitudes with regard to current events instruction in the social studies curriculum; and (4) to determine whether current events instruction has been enhanced or hindered by administrative policy.

Importance of the study. Recent curriculum studies across the country have brought the development of new social studies programs.

These programs focus on different goals than past social studies instruction. They employ instructional ideas that have been successfully used in the mathematics and science programs recently adopted by most public and private schools. Such a curriculum study has been initiated in Des Moines. It is designated as the Advisory Committee for the Social Studies and illustrates that professional leadership in curriculum organization is a basic function of administration. The teaching of current events is an area which should be part of curriculum improvement.

As the review of literature will show, the use of current events in the social studies classroom has long been a problem to teachers. There usually is not a separate current events class, so the responsibility for teaching falls on the social studies teacher, if indeed current events are taught at all. Some method of incorporation must then be devised, often on very short notice, and without practical guidance from educational literature.

The mass media of television, radio, newspapers, and current periodicals focus attention on local, state, national, and world events almost as they occur. Current events might be ignored, but they will not go away or cease to occur. It was the investigator's firm conviction that current events must be integrated into and become an integral part of the social studies curriculum which led to this study. It was also the firm conviction of the California Council on Improvement of Instruction. This group conducted a successful experiment and study over a period of more than three years, in the use of current materials

in the classroom. The Council began the study with this thought in mind:

It is a basic assumption of our American way of life that all citizens have access to information regarding current affairs, that they are competent to form intelligent opinions on current issues, and that reasonable and intelligent decisions may be expected as a consequence. To suppose, however, that in these complex times such public intelligence develops without explicit direction is incorrect. Social and technical achievements of the past, the great literature, and the recorded history of mankind have meaning primarily as they relate to the present. Thus, the curriculum of the modern school in all its branches must find an effective means for relating formally organized content with the events of today and tomorrow.¹

Need for the study. First, the investigator in doing preliminary readings concerning the use of current events in the social studies curriculum found that the major authorities agreed as to the importance and need for current events instruction in the curriculum. Agreement was not forthcoming, however, on the methods used or the time allotted for such instruction. A study of current events instruction in an actual school system would give some factual background to this problem. The actual position and scope of current events instruction in the school district in which the investigator is employed became the focal point of his curiosity. It is hoped that the concluded study will help clarify the position and scope of current events instruction in the social studies curriculum of the schools studied and lend background to the literature in this field.

¹Lucien Kinney and Katharine Dresden (ed.), Better Learning Through Current Materials (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1949), pp. vi-vii.

Second, after conferring with the supervisor of Social Science and the Advisory Committee for the Social Studies for the school system studied, the investigator determined two factors: (1) no study similar to this has been done in the selected schools, and (2) the findings of this study might aid changes in the social studies curriculum already under study in the system.

A third area of need for a study such as this was indicated by a review of completed thesis and dissertation abstracts for the period January, 1962, to January, 1970, contained in the Drake University Library. During this period no theses and only two dissertations were found to have been written in this area of interest and submitted by cooperating colleges and universities in the United States. One of the dissertations was a study of current events instruction in a foreign country. There is a wealth of opinion literature on the subject, and several independent groups are responsible for collective findings in other cases. It was the investigator's intent that the research done in this area would lend itself to the fund of knowledge now available.

The fourth area of need for this study came out of the investigator's perception of the changing society in America today, and especially the direction this changing society is pushing public education. Newsweek Magazine reported in a feature article on American education the following observation:

Basically, the student complaint is that their schools are out of touch with what is most important in their lives, that they have failed to keep pace with the great changes in American life during the past two decades. The society, the students know, has granted them more liberty than any previous generation; but their schools,

they feel, restrict and thwart them in everything from dress and deportment to curriculums. Many remain sullen and bored, simply 'doing time.' Others, less numerous but more important, raise the banner of rebellion, which these days carries only one word: 'relevance!'¹

The investigator did not wish to expand the merits or demerits of this statement. He uses it to bring into focus his fourth area of need for this study. Namely, the classroom teacher and the administrator cannot operate in a vacuum and abdicate the responsibility of instructional improvement, which is so clearly theirs. Current events as an integral part of the social studies curriculum would appear to be the ideal means of relating the school to reality and a worthy goal of instructional improvement.

II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The investigator limited his investigation to six Class AA secondary schools in Des Moines, Iowa, a metropolitan area of approximately 300,000 people.

The investigation sample surveyed sixty-eight social studies teachers with primary responsibilities for teaching tenth grade world history, eleventh grade American history, twelfth grade American government, and twelfth grade economics. The sample also included the thirty-three counselors and six principals of the secondary schools studied. These three groups represented the cross sectional view of

¹Peter Janssen, "What's Wrong with the High Schools?," Newsweek, LXXV (February, 1970), 65-69.

instructional improvement pertaining to current events instruction which was needed to make the comparisons and draw the conclusions cited in Chapters IV and V.

III. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Current event. A current event is a present-day event, a happening of today's world of social, economic, political, or scientific significance which usually is reported in the news.

Current events instruction. Current events instruction involves teaching the subject matter of the news in the schools. This is the concept of linking the past to the present and the present to the past, in the hope that the overall learning process is improved.

The secondary schools. The secondary schools in this study were six Class AA schools in Des Moines, Iowa, a metropolitan area of approximately 300,000 people. Included were grades ten through twelve in the following schools: (1) North, (2) Lincoln, (3) Hoover, (4) Technical, (5) East, and (6) Roosevelt.

The social sciences. The social sciences are "scholarly and advanced studies of human relationships. The social scientist is concerned with experimentation, research and discovery to widen the frontiers of knowledge about man and his relationships with other men and with his environment."¹

¹Chester W. Harris (ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Research (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1296.

The social studies. The social studies "comprise a portion of the school curriculum wherein the content, findings, and methods of the social sciences are simplified and reorganized for instructional purposes."¹

The social studies teacher. The social studies teacher is a trained, approved fulltime person working as a regular classroom teacher. The sample selected for this investigation have primary responsibilities for teaching tenth grade world history, eleventh grade American history, twelfth grade American government, and twelfth grade economics.

¹Ibid.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on current events instruction consists of actual research studies and opinions, varying in degree and depth. Individuals are responsible for some of the findings and opinions, while groups are responsible for collective findings in other cases. The studies and opinions presented here are in close relation to the problem of integrating current events into the social studies curriculum.

Prpich investigated and analyzed the prevailing practices with regard to current events instruction in the social studies curriculum in the four high schools of Salt Lake City, Utah. The prevailing practices with regard to current events instruction were determined by the use of a comprehensive questionnaire which was completed by all forty-seven social studies teachers in the four high schools. Based on questionnaire results, Prpich found that the social studies teachers attached special importance to cultivating interest in current affairs at all levels--local, state, national, and international. The methods and techniques used most frequently in current events instruction were class discussion, lectures by the teacher, and having students collect clippings and pictures from current materials. The most common practice with respect to time arrangement in teaching current events was to spend about ten to twenty minutes per class, per week, on

current affairs.¹ In relation to this, Prpich found that the "social studies teachers believed that the main deterrent to current events instruction was lack of time."² Students spent some time keeping informed about current events by reading the daily newspaper and news magazines, by listening to news broadcasts, and by discussing current affairs outside the classrooms. The amount of time spent by students, however, was considerably less than that spent by the social studies teachers in keeping informed about current affairs.³

In the successful three year study of the California Council on Improvement of Instruction, current materials were applied to social studies classes as well as science, mathematics, homemaking, foreign language, English, and art classes. In the history classrooms of the Council, a common point of view was found that "history, to be functional, must relate the present to the future and the past with a developing sense of perspective."⁴ The current materials used by the Council were books, periodicals, newspapers, government publications, charts, diagrams, film strips, slides, radio transcriptions, and motion pictures.⁵ The Council study was started in 1946, which accounts

¹Mike Prpich, "An Analysis of the Teaching of Current Events in the Social Studies Curriculum in the High Schools of Salt Lake City, Utah 1962-63," Dissertation Abstracts, XXV (July, 1964), 2323-2324.

²Ibid., p. 2324.

³Ibid.

⁴Kinney, op. cit., p. 13.

⁵Ibid.

for the absence of television from their list. The list of current materials was enlarged by the Council to include field trips, community activities, expert personnel brought into class, or "any and all procedures whereby the adult secures his knowledge of what is going on."¹ From observations of the classrooms where current materials were being used, two categories used by the teacher became apparent:

1. Current materials are supplementary, and the activities relating to them are considered as enrichment.
2. Current materials are a major and integral part of the basic instructional materials.²

The Council took the stand of finding out what current materials add to the possible outcomes of instruction, not should current materials replace the textbook. From this clearly stated goal, the Council then conducted studies in great depth and detail in such areas as current materials as enrichment, current materials as a basic resource, the room display area, and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching procedures.

Payne's edited work presents Brown's findings on some of the outstanding practices and experiences he and his colleagues had observed as part of the New York Times Current Affairs Survey made in 1949. Brown had found that connecting every historical unit with some current issue, whenever possible, contributed greatly to a sense of the relationships which exist between past and present. Adjustment of the curriculum to a faith in contemporary affairs as the most likely

¹Ibid., p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 17.

stimulant to learning in the social studies field and as the most serviceable nucleus around which to build social studies knowledges, attitudes, and behaviors, follows. The practices Brown reviewed start with the current affair and then proceed to the historical view. A considerable amount of time was spent on current events because of the emphasis that the teachers placed on them, and also the high degree of correlation with the basic textbook material.¹

Fraser and West approached current events instruction "as a desirable means of achieving social studies goals."² The goal of most importance was as follows:

The overriding purpose in teaching about current affairs and controversial issues in the secondary school is to help the student grow into a well-informed citizen who understands questions of public policy and contributes to their solution through the formation of a sound public opinion.³

This quotation indicates that Fraser and West also felt that current events instruction should bring more meaning to the social studies program and be an integral part of any social studies class. Their writings stressed the need for the social studies teacher to carefully select the specific content and learning materials to be used, and to "employ definite criteria to guide his selection."⁴ The

¹John C. Payne (ed.), The Teaching of Contemporary Affairs (Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Company, 1951), pp. 86-97.

²Dorothy Fraser and Edith West, Social Studies in Secondary Schools (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1961), p. 234.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 237.

major criteria were as follows:

1. Is the current topic suited to the maturity level of the students in the class?
2. Is the current development so important to the American public or the world at large that pupils who are mature enough to understand it should study it? This would be the criteria of significance.
3. Third, if a current happening does not meet the criterion of significance but is one in which pupils have expressed great interest, can it be used as a springboard to consideration of a topic that is significant and pertinent to the course content?
4. A fourth criterion for selecting a current affairs topic for class study is the availability of information concerning it.¹

Careful planning is needed to guard against current events instruction becoming a Friday afternoon free period in which the topics may or may not be related to the course content. Fraser and West referred to this possibility as "divorcing" current events instruction from the course content, rather than "relating" current events to the regular course work. This would coincide with the findings of the California Council on Improvement of Instruction in which teachers tended to view current events in two categories, one as supplementary, and the other as a major and integral part of the regular course content.

The methods and techniques put forth by Fraser and West for the integration of current events into the social studies program were as follows: (1) the weekly current affairs period, (2) incidental treatment of the news, (3) extended study of current affairs, (4) incorporating current affairs into regular course work, and (5) current affairs clubs.

¹Ibid., p. 238.

The weekly current affairs period utilizes one class period each week and employs a classroom newspaper. Activities within the current affairs period center on discussion based on advance assignments or of committee reports, also assigned in advance. Topics are selected from major topics of domestic and foreign affairs. This approach tends to "divorce" current events from the regular course content unless it is supplemented by one or more of the other approaches. There is also the danger of the exercise being little more than "a superficial study" if many current events are covered in the one period.

Incidental treatment of the news provides for dealing with the news only when an important event occurs, by discussing it at the beginning of the class period. As in the approach above, this plan needs to be supplemented by one or more of the other plans in order to be of any value to the student at all.¹

Extended study of current affairs is scheduled between the basic units of the course, or between subdivisions of the basic units. Topics are assigned in advance so that class time is used "to present and discuss information, to compare and evaluate sources that have been used, and to draw tentative conclusions about policies and problems related to the topics."² In order to provide continuity to current events instruction using this approach, it is necessary to supplement it with other more frequent approaches.

¹Ibid., pp. 240-244.

²Ibid., p. 242.

Incorporating current affairs into the regular course work and keeping unit plans flexible in terms of sequence to take advantage of current events, appears to be the approach favored by Fraser and West. The other approaches, including current affairs clubs, are of value only as they reinforce the incorporation method. The incorporation method is basically the practice of starting with the current scene and then proceeding to the historical view. The teacher of United States history may introduce a unit on federal-state relations during the Federalist period, for example, with study of the nations current federal-state problems such as desegregation of the public schools or responsibility for control of environmental pollution. The class may then analyze major policies, court decisions and other factors which caused shifts regarding jurisdiction and responsibility in various periods of the national history. Similar learning situations may be planned for geography, government, economics, and world history courses. Through the incorporation approach, a definite link between past and present is established and "students can learn the value of historical perspective for understanding present conditions."¹

In conclusion, Fraser and West listed varied procedures and materials for teaching current events. The procedures listed are special forms of oral reports by students, such as a radio newscast, and special forms of class discussion in the form of model meetings of such bodies as the United States Senate, a state legislature, or the

¹Ibid., pp. 242-243.

United Nations Security Council, in which a current issue is debated.¹

The materials listed were adult newspapers, current events papers prepared especially for the schools, radio and television newscasts and analyses, films and filmstrips prepared for school use, public meetings, political rallies, and other community resources such as guest speakers.² The time allotted to current events instruction would be in direct relation to the approach selected, varying from ten minutes at the start of the class period to a three or four day unit on current events sandwiched between regular course units. The incorporation or integration method would become so integral a part of the social studies class that the time differential between current events instruction and the regular course content would be indistinguishable.

The teaching of current events was the concern of a wealth of periodical and opinion literature. The review indicated that such instruction is minimal or non-existent. From this basic premise, with few exceptions, the review then indicated "how it ought to be done." Consensus was reached on the point that current events should be used to help students understand what happened in the past and to gain a better understanding of the present and future. Moulton simply commented that "added to an already overloaded schedule, current historical developments easily become a Friday-afternoon recitation

¹Ibid., pp. 244-245.

²Ibid., pp. 239-245.

"unrelated to the study of American history."¹

Hamm expressed his dissatisfaction with current events instruction by commenting that "frequently current events are handled piecemeal in a little block of time at the beginning of the class."² The current events under study were usually unrelated to the regular course content and amounted to little more than a rundown of newspaper clippings that students brought to class. Hamm felt "it would be better to ignore current events than to hit on the immediate happenings in the local or world situation in such a cursory manner."³ Concluding that one of the most effective ways to teach current events is by the student-discovery rationale, Hamm offered the following process:

1. A problem area is specified, preferably as it grows out of the regular curriculum content.
2. Four or five comprehensive how or why probing questions are designated.
3. The questions serve as framework for organizing committees.
4. Reading materials are made available to the committees, resources are shared, and skills of scanning and purposeful reading are developed.
5. Present the report to the class in some fashion such as role playing or panel presentations.⁴

Hamm's student-discovery rationale approach to current events instruction coincides with Fenton's mode of inquiry for the social

¹Muriel Moulton, "Current Events and the American History Course," Social Education, XXVIII (December, 1964), 453-456.

²Russell L. Hamm, "Current Events Rationale," Social Studies, LVI (January, 1965), 17-18.

³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴Ibid., pp. 17-18.

studies which has emerged as the effective means for overhauling the entire social studies curriculum. Fenton has provided for the development of the inquiry skills "with which the useful, independent citizen can separate truth from falsehood and acquire dependable new knowledge."¹

Wass felt that the value of current events instruction has often been judged unfairly because of some of the present practices. He criticized the scatter-gun method, the current event-a-day approach, paneled news, and the line-upon-line approach. These practices basically employ using a specified day of the week or the beginning of each class to have students bring in a current event to report on either individually or by panel presentation. The line-upon-line approach utilizes a student news periodical and the students orally read the text paragraph-by-paragraph.

Despite Wass' strong indictment of the present practices regarding current events instruction, endorsement was forthcoming in support for the concept of current events as an integral part of the social studies curriculum.² Wass stressed variety of procedure in teaching current events and that all social studies teaching "should be finally focused on interpreting the current scene and preparing for the future."³

¹Edwin Fenton, "The New Social Studies," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, LI (March, 1967), 62-73.

²Philmore B. Wass, "Improving Current Events Instruction," Social Education, XXV (February, 1961), 79-81.

³Ibid., p. 81.

The skills of news reading, listening, and viewing as they apply to reading newspapers and periodicals, and listening to news broadcasts and telecasts were equally stressed by Wass.

Spearheading the drive to help students continue their education after graduation is a program of in-service teacher education workshops. The workshops are designed to provide the necessary background for teachers to develop techniques of using the newspaper in the classroom. Hence, a better informed public is a desired outcome of the program. This outcome is provided for by teaching the basic skills of reading a newspaper reflectively to students, and also the role of a newspaper in a democracy.¹

In the case of the Crossett, Arkansas, public schools, the coordinator of social studies initiated a successful program in international affairs by using current events as the springboard. The new program in international affairs required the combined efforts of students, teachers, and administrators in moving from a special, no credit, night class status to full implementation in the regular curriculum. Students were more interested in the current daily newspapers and weekly news magazines because of the difference from the usual textbooks and because there was more of an opportunity and desire to express their own ideas and opinions.²

¹John H. Haefner, "News in the Classroom," Saturday Review, XLIX (January, 1966), 71.

²Simms McClintock, "Crossett, Arkansas; It Started with Current Events," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, LI (January, 1967), 54-59.

The creation of a separate current events class such as the international affairs course was a point of departure from the traditional procedure of somehow integrating current events into the established social studies curriculum. However, the creation of a separate current events course or a series of current events courses dealing with specific current problems or areas should not be overlooked as a possible social studies curriculum development. Wass concluded that the concern of the teacher is to decide how much information from the social sciences is needed to make current events comprehensible to his students.¹ This position would seem to relegate the regular course content to a supplementary role in support of a current events centered course.

SUMMARY

All of these research findings, and supporting literature, confirm the idea that current events should be used to bring more meaning to the social studies classroom. This is the concept of linking the past to the present and the present to the past, in the hope that the overall learning process is improved. However, the techniques of how to do this are many and varied. The time spent on current events is directly linked to the technique selected, thus again there is great variation. The teacher in most cases had the option of using current events or not using them which means either straight historical

¹Wass, op. cit., p. 80.

instruction or integrated instruction. In addition, the studies cited were conducted more than four years ago, and the events of the late sixties have demanded attention from the schools. The following quotation from Brown, writing on the present practices of using current events (1949), seemed to be applicable to the present problem.

Success in the use of contemporary affairs, like most instances of success, is a function of adaptation and unique creativity. There can be stimulation but not blueprint, so far as the contributions of others are concerned.¹

¹Payne (ed.), op. cit., p. 88.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Drawing up the questionnaire. Upon investigation of the number of individual contacts necessary to make this survey possible, the investigator decided that the questionnaire was the most feasible instrument to use. The construction of the questionnaire was based upon the following criteria: (1) review of the literature, (2) study of recently completed studies, and (3) the expert opinion of individuals involved in social studies, counseling, and administration in the Des Moines area.

The review of literature indicated few pertinent investigations from which to draw criteria for the questionnaire. However, there was supporting literature dealing primarily with opinions about current events instruction. From the investigation and supporting literature the investigator determined the factors the questionnaire should deal with. Individual social studies teachers, administrators, and counselors provided the last source of information for the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was constructed with certain objectives established as criteria for data collection. The following is a list of those objectives:

First, a philosophy of the members of the sampled groups in regard to the position of current events in the social studies curriculum; second, the patterns or models of how the teaching of current events is incorporated into the social studies curriculum of

their schools; third, the amount of time presently devoted to current events instruction in their social studies classes; fourth, whether or not current events instruction should be increased or decreased in the social studies curriculum; fifth, the perception of the people in the sampled groups as to their position and function in finding an effective means for relating the social studies curriculum with current events; sixth, information concerning policies of particular schools or school district policies which may enhance or hinder the integration of current events into the social studies curriculum.

The questionnaire was then constructed by the investigator for validation.

Selecting the sample. The selection of a representative sample was based upon the preliminary process of compiling lists of all principals, counselors, and teachers of tenth grade world history, eleventh grade American history, twelfth grade American government, and twelfth grade economics from the six Class AA secondary schools in Des Moines, Iowa.

To obtain the data needed the investigator submitted a request for approval of the investigation to the assistant superintendent for education of the selected school system. This approval was received from the assistant superintendent for education and the director of secondary education for the system studied. Following the suggestion from the central administration of the selected school system, the investigator contacted, in writing, the principals, explained the nature of this study to them, and requested the following information: (1) a

list of all tenth grade world history teachers, eleventh grade American history teachers, twelfth grade American government teachers, twelfth grade economics teachers, and (2) the names of the counselors in that school. Upon the return of this information, the actual selection of the sample was accomplished by the investigator, selecting a 100 per cent sample of the three groups to be surveyed: social studies teachers, counselors, and principals.

Validation and administration of the questionnaire. The validation consisted of administering the questionnaire to a random sample equal to 10 per cent or more of the sample who would receive the revised and final questionnaire. All individuals in the validation sample would receive the revised questionnaire after validation. The number of validating questionnaires used for each group sampled were as follows: for the social studies teacher group, eighteen; for the counselors, six; and for the principals, two.

Upon the return of the validating sample, the basic questionnaire was revised by the investigator on the basis of suggestions and comments made by the validating sample. Several additional suggestions were made by the investigator's committee chairman before final approval for use of the questionnaire was given. With final approval the questionnaires were mailed to the 100 per cent sample, and were returned by mail. This was undertaken during the third week of May, 1970. A cover letter

explaining the nature of the study, instructions for marking the questionnaire, and a suggested return date, was enclosed with the questionnaire.¹

¹Copies of the questionnaire and cover letters can be found in the Appendix of this study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Data for this study were assembled from the returned questionnaires. The investigator uses descriptive statistics and presents these in the form of tables of data related to the questions and groups sampled.

The three major groups sampled were social studies teachers, counselors, and principals. The investigator divided social studies teachers into four divisions. These divisions were based on four major subject areas of the teachers and the social studies curriculum followed by the six Class AA secondary schools in Des Moines, Iowa. The major divisions are as follows: (1) world history, (2) American history, (3) American government, and (4) economics. The data pertaining to the major divisions of social studies teachers were presented as a whole for each group as well as compositely for the entire group. The data pertaining to counselors and principals were presented as a whole for each, and also compositely where feasible.

The statistics used in the following pages were compiled from the returned questionnaires. The investigator received the following responses from the sampled groups: from social studies teachers, 88 per cent, or sixty of sixty-eight total questionnaires; from counselors, 79 per cent, or twenty-six of thirty-three total questionnaires; from high school principals, a 100 per cent return, or six of six total questionnaires. A total of 86 per cent or ninety-two of 107 total

questionnaires were received by the investigator, from which the data were compiled.

First, the social studies objectives of the six subject schools were investigated. Table I presents the data for this area. The data indicate that the major objective of the social studies class was to develop effective, functional citizens who can actually participate in solving social, economic, and political problems of the world. The groups indicated this choice by figures which represent between 70 and 100 per cent of the sample. Two other objectives received mention of between 40 and 100 per cent. They were: (1) to develop the skills of critical thinking, inquiry, analyzing, observation, interpretation, the ability to form well-considered judgments; and (2) to relate formally organized course content with the events of today and tomorrow. Both the social studies teachers and principals indicated equal interest in developing social studies skills and in developing functional citizens.

The investigator next wished to determine whether current events instruction was a function of the social studies class. The data presented in Table II, page 29, indicate the finding in this area. Social studies teachers, counselors, and principals indicated that current events was a function of the social studies class by a 100 per cent figure for all three groups.

The data presented thus far indicate a trend which can be followed through this study. Namely, that in theory the social studies

TABLE I

SOCIAL STUDIES OBJECTIVES OF SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Develop effective functional citizens				Relate course content with current events				Relate course content only				Develop social studies skills			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	16	84.2	3	15.8	13	68.4	6	31.6	7	36.9	12	63.1	14	73.6	5	26.4
Government teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	5	45.5	6	54.5	5	45.5	6	54.5	10	90.9	1	9.1
Economics teachers	8	88.8	1	11.2	7	77.7	2	22.3	4	44.5	5	55.5	8	88.8	1	11.2
World history teachers	18	85.7	3	14.3	13	61.9	8	38.1	6	28.6	15	71.4	18	85.7	3	14.3
Totals	50	83.3	10	16.7	38	63.3	22	36.7	22	36.7	38	63.3	50	83.3	10	16.7
Counselors	22	84.6	4	15.4	12	46.2	14	53.8	3	11.6	23	88.4	14	53.8	12	46.2
Principals	6	100.0	-	--	3	50.0	3	50.0	1	16.7	5	83.3	6	100.0	-	--
Totals	28	87.5	4	12.5	15	46.9	17	53.1	4	12.5	28	87.5	20	62.5	12	37.5

classes investigated were highly oriented toward current events instruction, within the existing framework of required courses for all students.

TABLE II
CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION AS A FUNCTION OF
SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES IN SIX CLASS AA
HIGH SCHOOLS, DES MOINES, IOWA
1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
United States history teachers	19	100.0	-	--	19	100.0
Government teachers	11	100.0	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	9	100.0	-	--	9	100.0
World history teachers	21	100.0	-	--	21	100.0
Totals	60	100.0	-	--	60	100.0
Counselors	26	100.0	-	--	26	100.0
Principals	6	100.0	-	--	6	100.0
Totals	32	100.0	-	--	32	100.0

Table II data enlarged on this trend, showing between 65 and 96 per cent of the groups sampled reported that no separate current events course existed in the schools investigated. One principal reported the existence of a separate current events course in his

school. He listed the official course title as "Contemporary Affairs."

TABLE III

CURRENT EVENTS AS A SEPARATE COURSE OFFERING
IN SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	1	5.3	18	94.7	19	100.0
Government teachers	1	9.1	10	90.9	11	100.0
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	9	100.0
World history teachers	4	19.1	17	80.9	21	100.0
Totals	9	15.0	51	85.0	60	100.0
Counselors	1	3.9	25	96.1	26	100.0
Principals	1	16.7	5	83.3	6	100.0
Totals	2	6.3	30	93.7	32	100.0

Continuing in this same area, the investigator next wished to investigate current events as a facet of extracurricular clubs or organizations in the schools sampled. The review of literature produced at least one instance where a successful extracurricular activity led to

the creation of a separate current events class.¹ The results which were obtained are worthy of further thought. The data presented in Table IV indicate that government and economics teachers, and principals

TABLE IV

CURRENT EVENTS AS PART OF AN EXTRACURRICULAR CLUB
OR ORGANIZATION IN SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
United States history teachers	3	15.8	16	84.2	19	100.0
Government teachers	5	45.5	6	54.5	11	100.0
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	9	100.0
World history teachers	5	23.9	16	76.1	21	100.0
Totals	16	26.7	44	73.3	60	100.0
Counselors	5	19.3	21	80.7	26	100.0
Principals	2	33.4	4	66.6	6	100.0
Totals	7	21.9	25	78.1	32	100.0

in numbers of 30 per cent and more were of the opinion that extra-curricular activities involved some facet of current events. The opinion of the other groups sampled did not reflect the same findings.

¹Simms McClintock, "Crossett, Arkansas; It Started with Current Events," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, LI (January, 1967), 54-59.

Almost 80 per cent of world history teachers and 84 per cent of American history teachers sampled felt that current events were not part of extracurricular activities. In either case it is interesting to observe that the activities listed by the sample indicating that current events were a part of extracurricular activities, concerned a variety of clubs and organizations. The clubs and organizations listed were United Nations Club, International Relations Club, Boys Club, Political Action Club, Russian Club, Debate Team, Student Council, and Drug Council.

The previous discussion of Table II, page 29, indicated that 100 per cent of the groups sampled felt that current events was a function of the social studies class. Table V presents the data regarding the views of the sampled groups as to the sufficiency of current events instruction.

The data indicate that among the social studies teachers there is no strong feeling that there is either sufficient or insufficient current events instruction in the social studies classes. Overall, a small majority felt current events instruction in the social studies classes was insufficient.

Among counselors, the data indicate more strongly the feeling of insufficient current events instruction. Sixty-five per cent of the counselors indicated this choice. The principals' response did not reflect the findings of either social studies teachers or counselors. Eighty-three per cent of the principals sampled felt that current events instruction was sufficient.

TABLE V

VIEWS OF SAMPLED GROUPS AS TO SUFFICIENCY OF CURRENT EVENTS
INSTRUCTION, SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES,
SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Sufficient		Not Sufficient		No answer		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	7	36.9	9	47.3	3	15.8	19	100.0
Government teachers	5	45.5	6	54.5	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	-	--	9	100.0
World history teachers	8	38.1	13	61.9	-	--	21	100.0
Totals	26	43.3	31	51.6	3	5.1	60	100.0
Counselors	4	15.4	17	65.3	5	19.3	26	100.0
Principals	5	83.3	1	16.7	-	--	6	100.0
Totals	9	28.2	18	56.2	5	15.6	32	100.0

Table VI indicates the percentage of social studies teachers who had training in the area of current events instruction, such as a workshop on using the newspaper in the classroom or a methods course in their college work. Eighty per cent of the social studies teachers had no training in this area.

It would appear that current events instruction in the social studies classes of the schools studied has been neglected in practice but not in theory. As was reported earlier, 100 per cent of the

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS WITH TRAINING
IN CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION,
SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	3	15.8	16	84.2	19	100.0
Government teachers	2	18.2	9	81.8	11	100.0
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	9	100.0
World history teachers	4	19.1	17	80.9	21	100.0
Totals	12	20.0	48	80.0	60	100.0

sampled groups indicated current events was a function of the social studies classes, only one principal reported that his school had a separate current events course, over half of the social studies teachers and counselors felt that current events instruction was insufficient, and 80 per cent of the social studies teachers had no specific training in current events instruction.

The data for Table VII report one of the major areas investigated by this study, that being the philosophy of the sampled groups as

to the implementation of current events instruction. Over 70 per cent of the government and world history teachers indicated that current events and materials should be incorporated into the regular course work, becoming a major and integral part of the social studies course

TABLE VII

PHILOSOPHY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION
BY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS, COUNSELORS AND
PRINCIPALS, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Current events optional and supplementary to course work		Current events major and integral part of course work		Totals	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
United States history teachers	8	42.2	11	57.8	19	100.0
Government teachers	3	27.3	8	72.7	11	100.0
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	9	100.0
World history teachers	6	28.6	15	71.4	21	100.0
Totals	23	38.4	37	61.6	60	100.0
Counselors	3	11.6	23	88.4	26	100.0
Principals	1	16.7	5	83.3	6	100.0
Totals	4	12.5	28	87.5	32	100.0

content and instructional materials. Fifty-seven per cent of the American history teachers held this same philosophy, whereas 66 per

cent of the economics teachers expressed a philosophy that current events should be optional and supplementary to the regular course work. Among counselors and principals, the data indicate that over 80 per cent of these groups supported the majority philosophy of the teachers.

Table VIII and Table IX lend further support to the conclusions indicated by the data and the discussion of Table VII.

Table VIII is concerned with the level of current events instruction in social studies classes. Over 75 per cent of the teachers sampled indicated that in their classrooms, the teaching of current events was being carried on at "all levels," local, state, national, and international.

The amount of social studies class time spent on current events instruction was another major area investigated. Table IX illustrates the pertinent data. Over 75 per cent of the economics and world history teachers indicated that they incorporated current events into regular course work; therefore, the time differential between current events instruction and regular course work became indistinguishable. Fifty-two per cent of the American history teachers and 63 per cent of the government teachers thus reported. Overall, only 7 social studies teachers reported that they spent less than one class period weekly on current events instruction. With this situation the investigator does not feel that current events instruction has been neglected, but rather that current events instruction has been implemented by a philosophy and time pattern which hinders simple observation or detection.

TABLE VIII

LEVEL OF CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION, SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Local		State		National		Inter- national		All levels		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	1	5.3	1	5.3	1	5.3	1	5.3	15	78.8	19	100.0
Government teachers	-	--	-	--	1	9.1	-	--	10	90.9	11	100.0
Economics teachers	-	--	-	--	1	11.2	-	--	8	88.8	9	100.0
World history teachers	-	--	-	--	-	--	2	9.6	19	90.4	21	100.0
Totals	1	1.7	1	1.7	3	5.0	3	5.0	52	86.6	60	100.0

TABLE IX

AMOUNT OF SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS TIME SPENT ON
CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION, SIX CLASS AA
HIGH SCHOOLS, DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	One class period weekly		Ten-Twenty minutes per class		Three-four day unit between regu- lar unit		Incorporate, time indis- tinguish- able		Less than one class period weekly		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	5	26.3	-	--	-	--	10	52.6	4	21.1	19	100.0
Government teachers	2	18.2	1	9.1	-	--	7	63.6	1	9.1	11	100.0
Economics teachers	1	11.1	-	--	1	11.1	7	77.8	-	--	9	100.0
World history teachers	1	4.8	1	4.8	1	4.8	16	76.1	2	9.5	21	100.0
Totals	9	15.0	2	3.4	2	3.4	40	66.6	7	11.6	60	100.0

Tables X, XI, XII, XIII, and XIV are concerned with the identification of the patterns or models of how the teaching of current events is incorporated into the social studies curriculum in the secondary schools of Des Moines, Iowa.

Table X concerns the identification of special methods or oral reporting used in teaching current events to social studies classes. The data indicate that between 45 and 75 per cent of the social studies teachers used individual reports by students, taken from clippings and pictures from current materials. Government, economics, and world history teachers indicated the use of reporting or lecturing by the teacher in numbers of between 35 and 70 per cent. Forty-two per cent of the world history teachers and 54 per cent of the government teachers used committee or panel reports on previously assigned categories or topics. Eleven of 60 social studies teachers indicated they used no special methods of oral reporting in teaching current events.

The identification of special methods of class discussion used in teaching current events is the focus of Table XI. The data indicate that the two major methods of class discussion were as follows: (1) "bull sessions," of a spontaneous or planned nature, and (2) discussion of a topic or event based on an assignment in which information is obtained from various sources. The information is then compared, evaluated, and synthesized by the whole class after the students have read about the topic involved. Ninety per cent of the world history teachers indicated they used the "bull session" method of teaching current events, whereas only 33 per cent of the economics teachers

TABLE X

IDENTIFICATION, SPECIAL METHODS OF ORAL REPORTING
 IN TEACHING CURRENT EVENTS, TO SOCIAL STUDIES
 CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
 DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Individual student reports taken from clippings and pictures				Radio or television newscast by student or group of students				Committee or panel reports on previously assigned topics			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	9	47.4	10	52.6	3	15.8	16	84.2	6	31.6	13	68.4
Government teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	3	27.3	8	72.7	6	54.5	5	45.5
Economics teachers	5	55.5	4	44.5	1	11.2	8	88.8	3	33.4	6	66.6
World history teachers	13	61.9	8	38.1	1	4.8	20	95.2	9	42.9	12	57.1
Totals	35	58.4	25	41.6	8	13.4	52	86.6	24	40.0	36	60.0

TABLE X (continued)

Reporting Group	Report or lecture by teacher				None			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	7	36.9	12	63.1	5	26.4	14	73.6
Government teachers	6	54.5	5	45.5	1	9.1	10	90.9
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	2	22.3	7	77.7
World history teachers	10	47.7	11	52.3	3	14.3	18	85.7
Totals	29	48.4	31	51.6	11	18.4	49	81.6

TABLE XI
IDENTIFICATION, SPECIAL METHODS OF CLASS DISCUSSION
USED IN TEACHING CURRENT EVENTS, SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Groups	Discussion based on reading assignment. Information then compared, evaluated by students				Evaluative discussion of taped speech, news film or filmstrip, after back- ground reading by students				Bull sessions, spontaneous or planned			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	8	42.2	11	57.8	3	15.8	16	84.2	12	63.1	7	36.9
Government teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	5	45.5	6	54.5	7	63.6	4	36.4
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	1	11.2	8	88.8	3	33.4	6	66.6
World history teachers	12	57.1	9	42.9	4	19.1	17	80.9	19	90.4	2	9.6
Totals	34	56.6	26	43.4	13	21.7	47	78.3	41	68.3	19	31.7

TABLE XI (continued)

Reporting Groups	Role-playing utilizing staged discussions, model meetings, such as legislature							
					None			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	2	10.6	17	89.4	4	21.1	15	78.9
Government teachers	3	27.3	8	72.7	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	1	11.2	8	88.8	1	11.2	8	88.8
World history teachers	5	23.9	16	76.1	-	--	21	100.0
Totals	11	18.4	49	81.6	5	8.4	55	91.6

indicated they used the technique. Sixty-three per cent of the American history and government teachers agreed on the use of "bull sessions." Table XI also indicates that discussion of a topic or event based on an assignment in which information is obtained from various sources, was used by 40 to 70 per cent of the social studies teachers. A small proportion of the teachers sampled used no methods of class discussion in teaching current events. This group totaled less than 9 per cent of the social studies teachers sampled.

Table XII identifies the current periodicals worked with in teaching current events in social studies classes. Daily newspapers and news magazines were the two major current periodicals used by the social studies teachers. Government, economics, and world history teachers indicated these choices by over 88 per cent, whereas overall, less than 25 per cent of the teachers used special classroom student newspapers, government publications, and books. One teacher reported he used no current periodicals in teaching current events in his social studies classes.

The major audio-visual media materials used in teaching current events were television programs, motion pictures, film strips, slides, and transparencies. Table XIII presents the data for this area. The social studies teachers indicated these choices in numbers ranging from 31 to 77 per cent. Only 7 teachers reported using radio programs, and 5 teachers or 8 per cent reported that they used no audio-visual media materials.

TABLE XII

IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT PERIODICALS WORKED WITH IN
TEACHING CURRENT EVENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Daily newspapers				News magazines such as <u>Newsweek</u>				Special classroom student newspapers, magazines			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	13	68.4	6	31.6	15	78.9	4	21.1	4	21.1	15	78.9
Government teachers	10	90.9	1	9.1	11	100.0	-	--	3	27.3	8	72.7
Economics teachers	8	88.8	1	11.2	9	100.0	-	--	2	22.3	7	77.7
World history teachers	20	95.2	1	4.8	19	90.4	2	9.6	2	9.6	19	90.4
Totals	51	85.0	9	15.0	54	90.0	6	10.0	11	18.4	49	81.6

TABLE XII (continued)

Reporting Group	Government publications				Books				None			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	1	5.3	18	94.8	5	26.4	14	73.6	-	--	19	100.0
Government teachers	6	54.5	5	45.5	4	36.4	7	63.6	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	1	11.2	8	88.8	-	--	9	100.0
World history teachers	2	9.6	19	90.4	4	19.1	17	80.9	1	4.8	20	95.2
Totals	12	20.0	48	80.0	14	23.4	46	76.6	1	1.7	59	98.3

TABLE XIII

IDENTIFICATION OF AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA MATERIALS USED IN
TEACHING CURRENT EVENTS, SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Television programs				Radio programs				Motion pictures			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	11	57.8	8	42.2	1	5.3	18	94.7	14	73.6	5	26.4
Government teachers	7	63.6	4	36.4	3	27.3	8	72.7	5	45.5	6	54.5
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	1	11.2	8	88.8	7	77.7	2	22.3
World history teachers	14	66.6	7	33.4	2	9.6	19	90.4	11	52.3	10	47.7
Totals	38	63.3	22	36.7	7	11.7	53	88.3	37	61.6	23	28.4

TABLE XIII (continued)

Reporting Group	Current films produced for student viewing				Film strips, slides, transparencies				None			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	10	52.6	9	47.4	6	31.6	13	68.4	1	5.3	18	94.7
Government teachers	6	54.5	5	45.5	8	72.7	3	27.3	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	2	22.3	7	77.7	7	77.7	2	22.3	2	22.3	7	77.7
World history teachers	10	47.7	11	52.3	9	42.9	12	57.1	2	9.6	19	90.4
Totals	28	46.7	32	53.3	30	50.0	30	50.0	5	8.4	55	91.6

Table XIV depicts what community resources were used in teaching current events to social studies classes. The data present a contrast between the government teachers sampled as opposed to the American history, economics, and world history teachers. Seventy-two per cent of the government teachers indicated they used field trips, whereas 68 per cent of the American history teachers, 66 per cent of the economics teachers, and 90 per cent of the world history teachers reported that they did not use field trips.

Guest speakers were used by 63 per cent of the government teachers, whereas American history, economics, and world history teachers indicated in numbers of 55 per cent and more that guest speakers were not a part of their programs. Individual student or committee interviews of public officials, political candidates, civic leaders, or other citizens who had a definite point of view on a current issue were used by 54 per cent of the government teachers. Economics teachers followed with 44 per cent that used interviews, whereas less than 20 per cent of the world history teachers used the technique of student interviews. Twenty-seven of 60 social studies teachers indicated that they used no community resources in teaching current events in their social studies classes.

One teacher listed as his reason for not using community resources, the "red tape" that a teacher must go through to take students on a field trip or have a guest speaker approved by the school administration. The arrangement of transportation for a field trip appeared to be an obstacle to such an activity, in the opinion of this

TABLE XIV

IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES USED IN
TEACHING CURRENT EVENTS, SOCIAL STUDIES
CLASSES, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Field trips				Guest speakers				Local University activities			
	Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	6	31.6	13	68.4	6	31.6	13	68.4	2	10.6	17	89.4
Government teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	7	63.6	4	36.4	2	18.2	9	81.8
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	4	44.5	5	55.5	2	22.3	7	77.7
World history teachers	2	9.6	19	90.4	6	28.6	15	71.4	4	19.1	17	80.9
Totals	19	31.7	41	68.3	23	38.4	37	61.6	10	16.7	50	83.3

TABLE XIV (continued)

Reporting Group	Student interviews of public officials, candidates, leaders							
					None			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	5	26.4	14	73.6	9	47.4	10	52.6
Government teachers	6	54.5	5	45.5	3	27.3	8	72.7
Economics teachers	4	44.5	5	55.5	3	33.4	6	66.6
World history teachers	4	19.1	17	80.9	12	57.2	9	42.8
Totals	19	31.7	41	68.3	27	45.0	33	55.0

teachers. As to the approval of guest speakers, it is the policy of the Des Moines schools that guest speakers be approved by the individual building principal.

Table XV presents the views of social studies teachers as to the effectiveness of bulletin board displays in stimulating news reading and interest for students. Government, economics, and world history teachers indicated in numbers of 66 to 72 per cent that bulletin board displays did stimulate news reading and interest for students. Fifty-seven per cent of the American history teachers also agreed with this view.

TABLE XV

VIEW OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS AS TO EFFECTIVENESS, BULLETIN
BOARD DISPLAYS IN STIMULATING NEWS READING AND INTEREST
FOR STUDENTS, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	11	57.8	8	42.2	19	100.0
Government teachers	8	72.7	3	27.3	11	100.0
Economics teachers	6	66.6	3	33.4	9	100.0
World history teachers	14	66.6	7	33.4	21	100.0
Totals	39	65.0	21	35.0	60	100.0

Table XVI is concerned with the question of teaching only non-controversial current events in social studies classes. Social studies teachers indicated in numbers of 94 to 100 per cent that controversial, as well as non-controversial, current events should be taught in social studies classes. The principals and counselors agreed with this by a 100 per cent figure for both groups. One world history and 1 American history teacher indicated that only non-controversial current events should be taught in the social studies classes.

TABLE XVI

VIEWS OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND PRINCIPALS,
SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS, DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70,
AS TO TEACHING ONLY NON-CONTROVERSIAL CURRENT
EVENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES

Reporting Group	Yes		No		Totals	
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent	Num-ber	Per-cent
United States history teachers	1	5.3	18	94.7	19	100.0
Government teachers	-	--	11	100.0	11	100.0
Economics teachers	-	--	9	100.0	9	100.0
World history teachers	1	4.8	20	95.2	21	100.0
Totals	2	3.4	58	96.6	60	100.0
Counselors	-	--	26	100.0	26	100.0
Principals	-	--	6	100.0	6	100.0
Totals	-	--	32	100.0	32	100.0

The investigator was interested in the opinion of the groups sampled as to the main deterrent, if any, to current events instruction in the schools sampled. Table XVII presents the results of data compiled for this question.

The data indicate that among the social studies teachers there is no strong feeling toward any one obstacle to current events instruction. Fifty-four per cent of the government teachers and 52 per cent of the world history teachers reported that they felt the poor availability of current materials and information for class study was the main deterrent to current events instruction. Thirty-three per cent of the economics teachers were in agreement with the government and world history groups, whereas only 15 per cent of the American history teachers indicated agreement.

Overall, only 15 per cent of the social studies teachers felt that there was not enough time to cover the textbook material, let alone current events. Two principals indicated that there was not enough time to teach current events and 3 principals commented that teachers were the main deterrent to current events instruction. One of the 3 principals that commented felt that some teachers were "hooked on the textbook."

Table XVII data also indicate that there were no significant administrative or community pressures to avoid teaching controversial current events in the classroom. Only 4 of 60 social studies teachers indicated the existence of administrative pressures to avoid teaching

TABLE XVII

VIEWS OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND PRINCIPALS
AS TO MAIN DETERRENT TO CURRENT EVENTS INSTRUCTION,
SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Not enough time		Poor avail- ability of current mate- rials for class study		Lack of student interest		Admini- strative discour- agement		Community pressure		None of these		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	6	31.6	3	15.7	4	21.1	2	10.6	1	5.3	3	15.7	19	100.0
Government teachers	-	--	6	54.5	2	18.2	-	--	-	--	3	27.3	11	100.0
Economics teachers	1	11.1	3	33.4	2	22.2	-	--	1	11.1	2	22.2	9	100.0
World history teachers	2	9.5	11	52.3	1	4.8	2	9.5	1	4.8	4	19.1	21	100.0
Totals	9	15.0	23	38.3	9	15.0	4	6.6	3	5.1	12	20.0	60	100.0
Counselors	5	19.3	4	15.4	6	23.0	-	--	1	3.9	10	38.4	26	100.0
Principals	2	33.4	-	--	-	--	-	--	-	--	4	66.6	6	100.0
Totals	7	21.8	4	12.6	6	18.7	-	--	1	3.2	14	43.7	32	100.0

controversial current events. Among counselors and principals, there was 100 per cent support for the majority opinion of the teachers.

As was reported earlier, 100 per cent of the principals indicated that current events instruction was a function of the social studies classes, 83 per cent indicated that current events and materials should be implemented as a major and integral part of the social studies classes, and 100 per cent indicated that controversial, as well as non-controversial, current events should be taught in social studies classes. These data lend further support to the conclusions indicated by the data and the discussion of Table XVII.

Table XVIII presents the data for the opinions of the sampled groups with regard to the following question: "In your opinion, should the creation of a separate current events course dealing with specific current problems or areas be a social studies curriculum development in your school?"

The data indicate that 52 per cent of the American history teachers, 54 per cent of the government teachers, and 71 per cent of the world history teachers were of the opinion that a separate current events course should be a social studies curriculum development in their schools. The economics teachers were of a different opinion, with 66 per cent reporting that a separate current events course should not be a curriculum development in their schools. Overall, 56 per cent of the social studies teachers and 68 per cent of the counselors and principals were in favor of the curriculum development.

TABLE XVIII

VIEWS OF SAMPLED GROUPS AS TO CREATION OF SEPARATE CURRENT EVENTS
COURSE OR SERIES OF COURSES DEALING WITH SPECIFIC CURRENT
PROBLEMS OR AREAS, SIX CLASS AA HIGH SCHOOLS,
DES MOINES, IOWA, 1969-70

Reporting Group	Yes		No		No answer		Totals	
	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
United States history teachers	10	52.6	9	47.4	-	--	19	100.0
Government teachers	6	54.5	5	45.5	-	--	11	100.0
Economics teachers	3	33.4	6	66.6	-	--	9	100.0
World history teachers	15	71.4	6	28.6	-	--	21	100.0
Totals	34	56.6	26	43.4	-	--	60	100.0
Counselors	18	69.2	7	26.9	1	3.9	26	100.0
Principals	4	66.6	2	33.4	-	--	6	100.0
Totals	22	68.7	9	28.1	1	3.2	32	100.0

The final division of Chapter IV is concerned with opinion questions dealing with selected areas of administration and guidance, directed toward principals and counselors only. As was reported in Table XVIII, over 65 per cent of the principals were of the opinion that the creation of a separate current events course or series of courses dealing with specific current problems or areas, should be a curriculum

development in their schools. The following data present the views of the principals as to whether professional leadership in curriculum organization, such as initiating curriculum changes, is a basic function of administration. One hundred per cent of the principals indicated that professional leadership in curriculum organization is a basic function of administration.

Another area investigated concerned whether instructional improvement on the building level is a basic function of administration. Five of six principals indicated that instructional improvement on the building level is a basic function of administration. Three of the principals qualified their answers by adding that instructional improvement on the building level should be a joint principal-teacher function, with teachers taking part in their own special areas.

Counselors were asked to respond to the following question: "Do you believe that changing the social studies curriculum to include more contemporary or current events courses as electives or alternatives to required courses would aid you in student scheduling problems?"

The data indicate that 80 per cent of the counselors felt that the change would aid in student scheduling problems. As was reported in Table XVIII, over 65 per cent of the counselors were of the opinion that the creation of a separate current events course or series of courses dealing with specific current problems or areas should be a curriculum development in their schools. There appears to be a greater number of counselors that feel the social studies curriculum change would help in student scheduling problems than actually want the change to occur.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to investigate the integration of current events into the social studies curriculum of the Des Moines, Iowa, secondary schools. The purposes of this study were as follows: (1) to identify patterns or models of how the teaching of current events was incorporated into the social studies curriculum in the secondary schools of Des Moines, Iowa; (2) to determine how much time was devoted to current events instruction in said classes; (3) to present professional educators' attitudes with regard to current events instruction in the social studies curriculum; and (4) to determine whether current events instruction has been enhanced or hindered by administrative policy.

First, the questionnaire was constructed by the investigator and was based upon the following criteria: (1) review of the literature (2) study of recently completed studies, and (3) the expert opinion of individuals involved in social studies, counseling, and administration in the Des Moines area.

Second, the investigator selected a 100 per cent sample of the three groups to be surveyed: social studies teachers, counselors, and principals from the six Class AA secondary schools in Des Moines, Iowa. Approval of the investigation was received from the assistant superintendent for education and the director of secondary education for the system studied.

The third step concerned validating the questionnaire. The validation consisted of administering the questionnaire to a random sample equal to 10 per cent or more of the sample who would receive the revised and final questionnaire. The basic questionnaire was revised by the investigator on the basis of suggestions and comments made by the validating sample and by the investigator's committee chairman before final approval for use of the questionnaire was given.

Last, the questionnaires were mailed to the 100 per cent sample and were returned by mail. The statistics used in this study and presented in Chapter IV were compiled from the returned questionnaires.

I. CONCLUSIONS

According to the data in this report the major objective of the social studies class was to develop effective, functional citizens who can actually participate in solving social, economic, and political problems of the world. To this end, a variety of patterns or models were identified as to how the teaching of current events was incorporated into the social studies curriculum in the secondary schools of Des Moines, Iowa. The data indicated that oral reporting in the form of individual reports by students taken from clippings and pictures from current materials, lecturing by the teacher, and committee or panel reports on previously assigned categories or topics were used in current events instruction.

The two major methods of class discussion were as follows: (1) "bull sessions" of a spontaneous or planned nature, and (2) discussion

of a topic or event based on an assignment in which information is obtained from various sources.

This investigation revealed that the major periodicals worked with in teaching current events in social studies classes were daily newspapers and news magazines. The data indicated that the major audio-visual media materials used in teaching current events were television programs, motion pictures, film strips, slides, and transparencies.

The data on the use of community resources revealed that government teachers were the group that used these methods in the greatest numbers. Field trips, guest speakers, and individual student or committee interviews of public officials headed the list of community resources used in current events instruction.

After identifying the patterns or models of current events instruction, a second major area of this investigation was to determine how much time was devoted to current events instruction in the social studies classes. The data presented in Table IX indicated that current events instruction was incorporated into regular course work; therefore, the time differential between current events instruction and regular course work became indistinguishable. This find, coupled with the finding that the majority of social studies teachers, counselors, and principals held the philosophy that current events should be implemented as a major and integral part of the social studies course content, indicates that current events instruction has not been neglected. Current events instruction has been implemented by a philosophy and time pattern which hinders simple observation or detection.

Third, this investigation revealed that from 94 to 100 per cent of all three groups sampled were of the opinion that current events instruction, controversial as well as non-controversial, was a function of the social studies class. The data concerning professional educators' attitudes and opinions with regard to current events instruction also revealed that a separate current events course dealing with specific current problems or areas should be a curriculum development in their schools.

Last, the data indicated that current events instruction was not hindered by administrative policy or community pressures. The principals indicated very liberal attitudes toward current events instruction. However, the fact that social studies teachers reported that they felt the poor availability of current materials and information for class study was the main deterrent to current events instruction could be interpreted as an administrative policy or hindrance toward current events instruction. This would have concerned the allocation of money for instructional materials.

In conclusion, the study indicated that in the schools studied social studies classes were highly oriented toward current events instruction within the existing framework of required courses for all students.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from the investigator are suggested on the basis of the data gathered and the conclusions formulated from that

data. They are as follows: (1) all social studies teachers should have, as part of their formal education, training in the area of current events instruction such as a workshop on using the newspaper in the classroom or a methods course; (2) a series of well-planned in-service training meetings aimed at acquainting the social studies teacher with the community resources available for current events instruction should be arranged; and (3) a reduction in the number of required social studies courses in the system studied, to provide for more elective courses dealing with specific current problems or areas, should be considered.

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APPENDIX

1703 Elder Lane
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
May 22, 1970

Dear Fellow Educator,

As partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Master's Degree in Education at Drake University, I have chosen to conduct a field report entitled, "The Integration of Current Events into the Social Studies Curriculum of the Des Moines, Iowa, Secondary Schools."

I am seeking your aid and cooperation in this study. Will you go over the enclosed questionnaire, and please check the information asked for from your point of view? If you have comments concerning current events instruction which you wish to express, but are not touched upon by the questionnaire, please write them in the space provided or on the back of the questionnaire. You need not identify yourself in any way.

Would you please mail the completed questionnaire to me, using the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by May 29, 1970?

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to assist me in this study. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

(signed)
Albert H. Graziano

AHG:mg
Enc.

CURRENT EVENTS QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND PRINCIPALS

This questionnaire attempts to find out the extent and methods of how the teaching of current events is incorporated into the social studies curriculum. Please mark the choice which applies to you. If the question does not apply, mark NA (Not Applicable) in front of it. The social studies classes referred to throughout this questionnaire are those listed in Question 1.

1. What is your major teaching area or assignment at the present time?

<input type="checkbox"/> United States history	<input type="checkbox"/> American government
<input type="checkbox"/> World history	<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling
<input type="checkbox"/> Economics	<input type="checkbox"/> Principal

2. How often do the social studies classes in your school meet?

<input type="checkbox"/> Every day	<input type="checkbox"/> Three days per week
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than three days per week	

3. How much time is scheduled per period for social studies classes in your school?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 to 55 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/> 56 minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Varies
<input type="checkbox"/> Over 56 minutes	

4. Students are assigned to the social studies classes by:

<input type="checkbox"/> Tracking of each grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Random selection
<input type="checkbox"/> Alphabetical sectioning of each grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

5. Please check the following objectives which in your opinion are related to the social studies curriculum in your school:

<input type="checkbox"/> To develop effective, functional citizens who can actually participate in solving social, economic, and political problems of the world
<input type="checkbox"/> To relate formally organized course content with the events of today and tomorrow
<input type="checkbox"/> To develop an understanding and appreciation of formally organized course content for its own intrinsic value as a body of knowledge
<input type="checkbox"/> To develop the skills of critical thinking, inquiry, analyzing, observation, interpretation, and the ability to form

well-considered judgments
 _____ Other

6. Do you feel current events instruction is a function of the social studies class?

_____ Yes

_____ No

7. Does your school have a separate current events course?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If your answer is yes, please list official course title.

8. Does your school have an extracurricular club or organization which discusses any facet of current events?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If your answer is yes, please list title.

9. Do you feel that only non-controversial current events should be considered in social studies classes?

_____ Yes

_____ No

10. Do you believe the amount of current events instruction in the social studies classes is sufficient?

_____ Yes

_____ No

11. Have you had training in the area of current events instruction such as workshop on using the newspaper in the classroom or a methods course?

_____ Yes

_____ Semester hours

_____ No

_____ Not applicable

12. Which approach listed below best describes your philosophy for the implementation of current events instruction?

_____ Current events and materials are supplementary and the activities relating to them are considered as enrichment to the regular course content and instructional materials. The use of current events and materials is optional with this approach.

_____ Current events and materials are incorporated into the regular course work, being a major and integral part of the social studies course content and instructional materials. The

incorporation method is basically the practice of starting with the current scene and then proceeding to the historical view. Keeping unit plans flexible in terms of sequence to take advantage of current events is very important to this approach.

_____ Other (please specify)

13. In your opinion, what is the main deterrent, if any, to current events instruction?

_____ Not enough time to cover the textbook, let alone current events

_____ Availability of information and current materials for class study is poor.

_____ Lack of interest by students

_____ Administrative discouragement of teaching controversial current issues and events in the classroom

_____ Community pressure to avoid current controversial issues and events in the classroom

_____ None of these

_____ Other (please specify)

14. Do you feel teacher enthusiasm and knowledge concerning current events has a direct bearing on student enthusiasm and response to current events instruction?

_____ Yes

_____ No

15. In your opinion, should the creation of a separate current events course or a series of current events courses dealing with specific current problems or areas be a social studies curriculum development in your school?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, please list potential course title: _____

16. In your opinion, what would the creation of a separate current events course or a series of current events courses dealing with specific current problems or areas accomplish?

_____ Help to better relate the school to reality by answering the demand for "relevance."

_____ Force the number of required social studies courses to be reduced to make room for the additions.

_____ Make it necessary to go to the seven or eight period day, without reducing the number of required courses, by cutting the present amount of class time.

_____ In any case, it would be a long overdue improvement for the social studies curriculum.

_____ Role-playing by students, utilizing staged discussions and model meetings of such bodies as the United States Senate, a state legislature, the United Nation's Security Council, or labor-management negotiations, in which a current issue is debated and resolved through discussion.

_____ None

_____ Other (please specify)

22. What current periodicals do you work with in teaching current events in your social studies classes?

_____ Daily newspapers

_____ News magazines such as Newsweek, Time, or U. S. News and World Report

_____ Special classroom student newspapers and magazines

_____ Government publications

_____ Books

_____ None

_____ Other (please specify)

23. Please check the following audio-visual media materials you use in teaching current events in your social studies classes.

_____ Television programs

_____ Radio programs

_____ Motion pictures

_____ Current films produced for student viewing.

_____ Film strips, slides, transparencies

_____ None

_____ Other (please specify)

24. What community resources do you work with in teaching current events in your social studies classes?

_____ Field trips (to state legislatures, city council meetings, and other public meetings and community activities)

_____ Expert personnel as guest speakers

_____ Local university activities

_____ Individual or committee interviews of public officials, political candidates, civic leaders, or other citizens who have a definite point of view on a current issue, reported to the class, and discussed.

_____ None

_____ Other (please specify)

25. What amount of social studies class time do you spend on current events instruction using all or any combination of the above-mentioned approaches and materials?

☐ One class period a week
☐ Ten to twenty minutes per class, per week
☐ Three or four day unit on current events sandwiched between regular course units.
☐ Incorporate current events into regular course work; therefore, time differential between current events instruction and regular course content becomes indistinguishable.
☐ Less than one class period a week
☐ None

26. In your opinion, do you feel that bulletin board displays on famous world figures, places, and events help stimulate news reading and interest for students?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Questions 27-28 are for principals only.

27. Do you feel that professional leadership in curriculum organization such as initiating curriculum changes is a basic function of administration?

☐ Yes ☐ No

28. Do you feel that instructional improvement on the building level is a basic function of administration?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Questions 29-30 are for counselors only.

29. Do you believe that changing the social studies curriculum to include more contemporary or current events courses as electives or alternatives to required courses would aid you in student scheduling problems?

☐ Yes ☐ No

30. In your opinion, would opening up the social studies curriculum with more electives and fewer required courses make the social studies curriculum and teachers more responsive to the student body they serve?

☐ Yes ☐ No

1703 Elder Lane
Des Moines, Iowa 50315

Principal
High School

Dear Principal:

Recently I submitted a request to do a study concerning the integration of current events into the social science curriculum of the Des Moines, Iowa, secondary schools. Dr. Richard P. Klahn and Dr. Robert R. Denny reviewed my request and gave their approval to proceed.

The suggestion was made that I contact the principals of the six high schools to be sampled and make plans accordingly. My study will entail the distribution of a questionnaire to all of the social studies teachers in your school with responsibilities for teaching tenth grade world history, eleventh grade American history, twelfth grade American government, and twelfth grade economics. The sample also will include all counselors and principals of the secondary schools studied. These sample groups represent the cross sectional view of instructional improvement pertaining to current events instruction which is needed to make this study possible.

I am now asking your assistance to aid me in my study. Would you send me the following information: (1) a list of the social studies teachers in your building with responsibilities for teaching tenth grade world history, eleventh grade American history, twelfth grade American government, and twelfth grade economics, and (2) the names of the counselors in your school. I will call for an appointment with you to discuss the actual distribution of the questionnaire in your building.

Thank you for the time and cooperation in assisting me in this study.

Sincerely,

(signed)
Albert H. Graziano

AHG:mg
Enc.